

Sexual Violence: Digital Communication & Safety

Grades 9-12, Lesson 19

Student Learning Objectives

The student will be able to ...

1. identify advantages and disadvantages of using the internet and digital technology to communicate.
2. identify three specific digital communication behaviors that put teens at risk for sexual violence
3. identify three behaviors that they are already doing or can choose to do in the future to keep themselves safe online.

Agenda

1. Discuss ways that teens are currently using online and communication technology.
2. Facilitate a discussion about the risks of sexual violence and their connections to technology.
3. Identify online risky behaviors in small groups, using the *Online Behaviors That Are Risky Handout* and the *Communication Scenarios Worksheet*.
4. List ways that teens can keep themselves safe online or while using other digital technologies.
5. Assign homework.

This lesson was most recently edited on January 20, 2011.

Materials Needed

Student materials

- **Online Behaviors that are Risky Handout** (one copy per student)
- **Communication Scenarios Worksheet** (one copy per student)
- **Handout for Parents and Guardians: Online Safety** (one copy per student)
- **Individual Homework: Digital Communication & Safety** (one copy per student)
- **Family Homework: Online Safety** (one copy per student)

Reminder: The English version is on the last page of this lesson plan. You will find the *Family Homework* in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH – click on “Parents & Guardians.”

Teacher Preparation

The day before ...

- Make copies of Materials Needed (see above)

Standards

National Health Education Standard

- **Standard 2:** Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
Performance Indicator 2.12.7 Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- **Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
Performance Indicator 4.12.3: Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.

Washington State Health Education Standard

- **Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR) 2:** The student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy life: Recognizes dimensions of health, recognizes stages of growth and development, reduces health risks, and lives safely.
Grade Level Expectations (GLE): 2.4.1 Understands types of abuse and risky situations and how to respond appropriately and safely.
- **Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR) 3:** The student analyzes and evaluates the impact of real-life influences on health. Understands how family, culture, and environmental factors affect personal health.
Grade Level Expectations (GLE): 3.1.1 Analyzes how family and cultural diversity enriches and affects personal health behaviors.

Activities

NOTE: Instructions to you are in regular font. A suggested script is in *italics*. Feel free to modify the script to your style and your students' needs.

1. Discuss ways that teens are currently using online and communication technology

In previous lessons you have learned lots of different ways to keep yourself healthy and safe. Today we're going to talk about the ways that we use technology to communicate and how teens can keep themselves safe and healthy in these environments

First, I want to hear from you. You all certainly know more than I do about what teens are already doing, so you tell me: What types of online spaces or digital tools are teens using to communicate with each other? As you list the type of technology, also tell me if there are certain things kids your age usually use it for – making plans, meeting new friends, etc.

Write up the list that students generate. This list should include, but may not be limited to the following (the underlined words might be the only ones you actually wrote during the brainstorm):

Technology

Internet

Social networking sites – Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.

Texting

Tweeting (which is Twitter),

YouTube

Chatting online

Possible Communication Uses

To meet other people; find out information about people (i.e. Google them)

To meet new friends or people to date; keep in touch with current friends and family; chat with friends online; flirt; share information quickly to a group of people

Keep in touch with friends and family; flirt; make plans

Share information quickly to a group of people; gossip

Share information and fun stuff with people and strangers; educate people; be creative; meet new friends or people to date; keep in touch with current friends and family

Meet new friends or people to date; keep in touch with current friends and family; flirt; make plans

Debrief with the following questions:

- *How are your interactions online or over text or chat **similar** than the interactions that you have in person with people? How are they **different**?*
- *What do you see the **positives or pros** that online interactions can offer?*
- *What do you see as some of the **risks or cons** about online interactions?*

Students may begin listing pros and cons as they are discussing similarities; write the pros, cons and risks on the board students raise them. See example below.

(Again, you can just jot the key words rather than everything they say; tell students to let you know if your notes don't capture their meaning.)

Some example pros, cons and risks are as follows:

Pros to online communication

Privacy

Anonymity
(sometimes)

Less inhibitions

Meet new people I
would never have met
otherwise

Easily ignore people
you don't want to talk
to

Freedom to say
whatever I want

Cons

Can't control forwarding or
reposting of your personal
information

Misunderstandings in
communication

Rumors spread super
quickly

Information that has been
posted can often be
retrieved even after deleting
it

Risks

End up at sites that I don't
want to be at

I get hit on by people that I'm
not interested in

Bullying and harassment is
easier and more public

I sometimes find myself in
situations that feel
uncomfortable that I don't
want to be in

Summarize the list from students: *The internet and other phone technology – texting and chat – have some great advantages. They can help you meet new people, stay connected with friends and family, share information and learn new information. However, as we discussed, there are some risks involved with these technologies too. Some of these risks are not new, but they can happen even more easily over the internet.*

2. Facilitate a discussion about the risks of sexual violence and their connections to technology

One of the risks of communicating over the internet and of using social networking sites is that people may receive unwanted sexual attention, or even have people say offensive or

scary sexual things to them. Some people may even be sexually assaulted later by a person they first made contact with online. Sometimes people are scared or hurt by people they don't know at all – a stranger from a chat room or a person who pretends to be someone they are not. However, just like with other types of sexual assault, it is more common for someone to be hurt by someone they know, even if they don't know them very well.

We mentioned earlier that one good thing about the internet is how easy it is to meet people online who have similar interests. These may be people you would never have met in real life – they may live in another location, or be friends with a different group of people, or they may be a much different age. One risk in online interactions, which we also see IRL (in real life), is that people sometimes initiate sexual relationships with people who are much older or much younger than them. The internet can make it easy for people who are much older or younger than each other to meet. Occasionally, they develop a relationship online and then meet in person and have sex.

As we discussed in our previous lesson about sexual violence, sex with someone who is much older or younger is against the law, even when both people agree to have sex. It may also be dangerous for the younger person.

Specific age differences in Washington State law can be found on page 4 of Appendix 2 of this binder, or in lesson 5: Sexual Violence. Elsewhere in the US, look up your state's statutory rape law here: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/SR/StateLaws/index.shtml>.

- *Why do you think that some teens end up in sexual relationships with people who are much older than them?*
- *Why might this be dangerous for the younger person?*

Some possible answers include:

- The older person probably knows more, and can use that knowledge to influence or take advantage of a younger person.
- The younger person may assume that the older person knows more, even when they don't. They are likely to believe what the older person says, which gives the older person a lot of opportunity to manipulate or lie to the younger person.
- The older person has access to things that the younger person doesn't, such as a car, an apartment, a job, alcohol, etc. This can make the older person seem very attractive as a dating partner, and may cause the younger person to overlook serious concerns they have about that person.
- Because the older person has more independence (maybe their own apartment or car, maybe no curfew if they still live at home), a younger person is more likely to end up in risky situation with an older person than they would have with a person their own age. The risky situations may involve being alone in an apartment with someone, being around alcohol or drugs, being out late alone, etc.

3. Identify online risky behaviors in small groups, using the *Online Behaviors That Are Risky Handout* and the *Communication Scenarios Worksheet*.

Give students the ***Online Behaviors That Are Risky Handout***. Briefly go over handout to ensure they understand each of the items.

Give students **Communication Scenarios Worksheet**. Working in pairs or teams, have them analyze their scenario(s) to decide what risks were taken, and what safer choices could have been made. They should use the **Online Behaviors That Are Risky Handout** to determine the risky behaviors. Debrief as a large group.

4. List ways that teens can keep themselves safe online or while using other digital technologies.

As you debrief the **Communication Scenarios** activity, ask each group, *What could each of the people in this scenario have done to keep themselves safer?* Write their suggestions for “safer choices” on the board. Reframe so that their suggestions become a list of safety suggestions.

Summarize points covered in the scenario activity. Make sure to mention – *So, we can’t just say that some social networking sites are bad and some are good ... except for the ones that are illegal. Otherwise, which are good or bad is a matter of opinion. What is most important is how people behave online with one another – what they talk about, who they talk with, and how they talk with each other. These are the things that may put people at risk, or allow others to take advantage of them.*

Review list of things that teens can do to keep themselves safe online, which was created during the scenario debrief. Make sure the answers include at least these things:

- Choose screen names you would feel okay saying to your parents or teachers.
- If you are going to meet someone in person who you only know online, meet with others, and never just to have sex.
- Don’t talk about sex with people you don’t know online.
- Only send pictures you would be okay with sharing with others.

5. Assign homework.

- a. **Individual Homework: Digital Communication & Safety**
- b. **Family Homework: Online Safety**

IMPORTANT HOMEWORK NOTE: In order to complete the *Family Homework* students will need **2 pages** to take home:

- **Family Homework: Online Safety AND**
- **Handout for Parents and Guardians: Online Safety**

Reminder: The English version is on the last page of this lesson plan. You will find the *Family Homework* in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH – click on “Parents & Guardians.”

Online Behaviors That Are Risky!*

1. Posting personal information online, such as home address, workplace, phone number, etc.
2. Interacting online with people you don't know.
3. Having people you don't know on a friend or "buddy" list.
4. Using the internet to make rude or nasty comments to other people.
5. Sending personal information to people who you met online.
6. Having a sexy-sounding screen name.
7. Visiting X-rated sites online on purpose.
8. Using the internet to embarrass or harass people that you are mad at.
9. Talking online to people you don't know in real life (IRL) about sex.

* 2008. Wolak J, Finkelhor D, Mitchell K, et al. "Online 'predators' and their victims: Myths, realities and implications for prevention and treatment." *American Psychologist*. 63

* 2006. Wolak J, Finkelhor D, Mitchell K. "Online victimization of youth: Five years later." Crimes against children research center, University of New Hampshire. Retrieved from:
www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/CV138.pdf

Communication Scenarios

1. Jaz and Joey are both 15 and have been dating for two months. They like being flirty over text with each other. The other night while they were texting things got heated and they sent some very sexy messages to each other. Joey asked for a picture. Jaz sent a picture of herself without a shirt on. A few weeks later Jaz broke up with Joey because she met a new guy that she liked. Joey was angry and sent some of the texts and the picture to his friends with some rude comments about her. He also decided to send them to Jaz's new boyfriend.
2. Jonah is playing his favorite online game. He is almost done with a difficult level, and is feeling really proud of himself. DustinStud23 pops onto the chat screen and says "Those were some hot moves!" Jonah, whose username is TightBoxers69, is flattered, and says "Thanks!" DustinStud23 speculates about what else is "tight" on Jonah, and their conversation becomes sexual.
3. Leticia's mom, got on her case and Leticia was furious with her. She wanted to vent, so she got onto her IM Buddy List to see who was around. She complained about her mom to Brian, who is older and doesn't live with his parents anymore. He says he used to get so mad at his mom, too, but that things are better now that he has his own apartment. He knows it's a school night, but says Leticia should come over and hang out at his place. She has never actually met him person, but she admires Brian and loves how supportive he always is.
4. Louisa's friend Veronica sent her a link a few weeks ago to a porn site. Louisa opened the link when she was at her dad's house, because she knew he wouldn't keep track of what sites she visits. She hadn't ever been to an x-rated site before, and looked at it for only a few minutes until she closed the screen in embarrassment. A few weeks later, Louisa was thinking about the site again, and opened the link. She explored the site, looking at pictures and videos, and noticed that there was an option to chat within the site. She signed up for a screenname, "SexxyLou17" and started chatting with people about a video she thought was really hot.
5. Ernesto feels like the last of his friends to sign up for that new social networking site. When he sits down to set up his account, there are so many options. He signs up as username: ErnHotBod, and enters his school, his address, his part-time job, and accepts almost 20 new "friends" – mostly people his friends know, and people the site recommended to him.
6. Manuel is still friends with three guys from his old middle school, even though he lives across the state now. One of his friends, Bob, isn't very popular. Bob sends a friend request to Oscar, who is a popular kid at his school. Oscar thinks that Bob is a nerd and posts a comment on his page to never contact him again, and how dare he friend-request him. Manuel joins in the conversation to say that Oscar is being a jerk, and Oscar and his friends post mean and harassing comments onto Manuel's page.

Individual Homework:

Digital Communication & Safety

1. What did you learn today about online risks and safety that you found surprising?

2. What are three things that put you and other teens at risk online?

- a.

- b.

- c.

3. List 3 things that you already do to keep yourself safe online.

- a.

- b.

- c.

4. List 2 new things that you've learned from this lesson that you can also do to keep yourself safe online.

- a.

- b.

5. What are some ways that your parent / guardian or another trusted adult can help you with this?

6. List two examples of things that could happen online that you should get help from a parent / guardian or trusted adult.

- a.

- b.

7. Who else could you talk to if something happened online that made you feel unsafe?

Family Homework: Online Safety

All Family Homework is optional. You may complete an Individual Homework assignment instead.

PURPOSE: This is a chance to share with one another some of your own (and your family's, your religion's) beliefs about sexuality and relationships. It will also give you a chance to get to know one another a little better.

DIRECTIONS: Find a quiet place where the two of you – the student and the trusted adult (parent, guardian, stepparent, adult friend of the family, best friend's parent, etc.) – can talk privately. Set aside about 10 minutes. During this time, please give full attention to one another ... no texting, watching TV and so on.

Now ask one another the following questions, with the understanding that:

- You are each welcome to say, "That one is too private. Let's skip it."
 - What you discuss will not be shared with anyone else, even within the family, unless you give one another permission to share it.
 - It's OK to feel silly or awkward and it's important to try the homework anyway.
- We recommend that you take turns asking questions. When it is your turn to listen, really try to understand the other person's response.

1. Go over the hand out for parents and guardians, titled "*Handout for Parents and Guardians: Online Safety.*"
2. Discuss some of the things that you already do to keep yourself safe online.
3. Discuss with your parent / guardian some new things that you've learned from this lesson that you can also do to keep yourself safe online.
4. What are some ways that your parent / guardian can help you with this?



Family Homework: Online Safety – Confirmation Slip

FOR FULL CREDIT, THIS HOMEWORK IS DUE: _____

We have completed this Homework Exercise.

Date: _____

student's signature

signature of family member or trusted adult

Handout for Parents and Guardians: Online Safety

High School FLASH lesson 19 discusses online technology in relation to safety.

In order for you to be familiar with what your child has learned, here is a list of behaviors that were covered in class. These are behaviors that could increase your child's risk for harassment or sexual exploitation:

- visiting x-rated sites on purpose
- interacting online with people they don't know in real life
- using cell phones or the internet to harass or make rude/nasty comments to others
- using file-sharing programs to download files (videos, music, etc)

The way to decrease these risks isn't to just stop using technology. Instead, we need to increase family awareness and communication. Developmentally, it is normal for teens to be interested in romance, adventure, sex, and independence.¹ However, teens need support from adults in their lives as they explore these interests. Without support and supervision from their parents and guardians, they may be at increased risk for exploitation online.

So how can adults help decrease risk? Here are some ideas:

- If you have access to a computer, use social networking sites *with* your teens. They can help teach you how to set up an account, and you can be their "friend" on the site. Social networking sites can be a fun way to communicate with each other!
- If you can, be open to talking about difficult subjects like sex and relationships, bullying, and sexual orientation. If you are a safe person for your teen to talk to, they are less likely to seek out support from other, potentially unsafe, sources.
- Create a family internet & technology use contract together. By working together, you will create opportunities for positive growth and communication for your teen.

Making an Internet Use Agreement:

<http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts>

Sample Internet Use Agreement:

www.cskcst.com/pdfs/ParentTeenAgreement.pdf

¹ 2008. Wolak J, Finkelhor D, Mitchell K, et al. "Online 'predators' and their victims: Myths, realities and implications for prevention and treatment." *American Psychologist*. 63

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